

PROPERTY PLANNING COMMON ELEMENTS

COMPONENTS OF MASTER PLANS

RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

ATV/UTV Riding

All-terrain vehicle (ATV) and utility task vehicle (UTV) riding occurs in two fundamental ways on public lands: as a recreation endeavor (primarily on trails) or as a transportation method (primarily on routes). Opportunities, needs and impacts associated with these two uses differ and will be described separately here.

Desired Experiences and Site Selection Considerations

Recreational Uses

ATV and UTV riders seeking recreational experiences typically prefer trails that meander through natural settings, similar in many regards to the trails sought by mountain bikers, horseback riders, and hikers. Riders often prefer combinations of longer distance trails and shorter loop trails. Because they can travel long distances in an outing, riding opportunities that are tens of miles in length (or longer) are preferred. Linking together trails with ATV/UTV routes on local roads can be an effective way to create high quality, long-distance experiences. This approach can also connect recreational riders to restaurants, gas stations, and other services in local communities.

Varied terrain is preferable for ATV/UTV trails, but steep slopes and unstable soils can affect development and maintenance costs and cause unnecessary resource damage. Areas with slopes exceeding 12% should be avoided, as should areas of sandy soils or peat and organic soils that are saturated for portions of the year. Trail segments with adverse conditions should be kept to a minimum for both long term costs and for environmental reasons.

Some riders desire specific areas designed for ATV/UTV use for more challenging opportunities. These can be dedicated lands that are already disturbed or areas within a property designed specifically for higher intensity ATV/UTV use.

Transportation Uses

Roads that allow ATV/UTV use must be designated by the controlling authority as “routes.” Routes can serve as short or long travel opportunities to access services and connect communities, and serve to connect private residences and businesses to trail networks. Routes can also provide a means for people to use ATVs and UTVs to access places for other recreational activities (e.g., hunting, fishing, gathering firewood or edible plants, and sightseeing).

Although ATVs and UTVs can run on asphalt and other hard materials, their wheels are not intended for these surfaces and to the degree possible routes on gravel or native-materials are preferred.

Site Selection on Department Lands

Most department lands are not intended to provide stand-alone motorized recreational opportunities. However, depending on location, topography, vegetation, recreational uses, and other factors, many department lands can



help provide connections in larger regional networks of trails and routes for motorized vehicles (including snowmobiles, ATVs, UTVs, and OHMs). If ATV/UTV use does not conflict with the primary purpose of the property, the department may designate trails or routes across lands it manages to help facilitate regional trail systems. Typically, these trails or routes are located on existing department roads.

In conjunction with local communities, larger department properties such as state forests may also be able to provide loop trails or routes that extend riding opportunities.

A designated use trail is necessary for this facility type. Designated ATV/UTV trails may be placed on lands with most NR 44 land classifications but recreational use settings will always be Type 3 (NR44.06) or Type 4 (NR44.07). Note that this use may not occur on land with a Type 3 recreational use setting, non-motorized recreation area (NR44.07(6)(h)), and is not compatible with Type 1 (NR44.07(4)) or Type 2 (NR 44.07(5)) recreational use settings.

The department's approach to locating, designing, constructing and maintaining ATV/UTV trails are described in:

- Manual Code 2527.9, All-Terrain Vehicle Trails on Department Lands
- Guidance for All-Terrain Vehicle Use on Department Lands
- Chapter 30 in the Department Design Standards Handbook (8605.1)
- Trails Handbook (2540.5) for trail and support facility design guidance and best practices to minimize environment damage.
- So You Want To Build an ATV Trail (<http://dnr.wi.gov/aid/documents/atv/buildatvtrail.pdf>)

Notable Differences in Participation or Opportunities Across the State

Most of the longer-distance riding opportunities are located on public lands, with the vast majority in the northern half of the state. There are over a thousand of miles of trails and routes on county and federal lands, with fewer miles on department lands. The Richard Bong State Recreation Area in Racine County is an example of a smaller scale, shorter trail opportunity. Several state trails on former railroad beds are mixed-use and allow ATV/UTVs, but that availability varies across the state. These trails provide connections to other trail and road networks.

Notable Times of the Year of High or Low Participation

Use is seasonal and occurs mostly between late spring and fall. Many roads and trails are closed in the spring due to soft trail treads during the spring thaw. Late summer and fall can be a very enjoyable recreation and tourism period with fall colors and cooler temperatures. Winter ATV/UTV riding is growing in interest; some snowmobile trails allow ATV/UTVs while others do not.



Participation

Participation Rate and Frequency

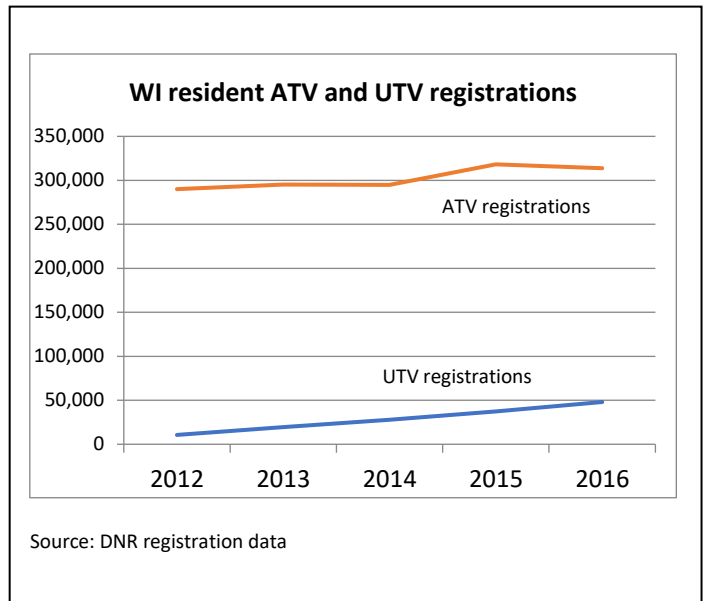
Based on a 2016 survey of Wisconsin residents conducted for the development of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), it is estimated that 16% of adult Wisconsin residents participate in ATV/UTV riding. This ranked #38 out of 64 activities evaluated.

Days/year	% of ATV/UTV Riders
1 to 2	35
3 to 9	36
10 to 29	17
30 or more	12
Total	100%

In terms of frequency, participants that engaged in ATV/UTV riding did so about in line with participants in other types of recreation (ATV/UTV riding ranked #28 in frequency out of 64 activities evaluated).

Estimated Trends

The popularity of motorized activities has grown over the last several decades, in part driven by advances in technology and the state's aging population. In particular, the growth in UTVs has been substantial in the last several years. Nationally, the number of UTVs sold is now nearly twice the number of ATVs sold. In Wisconsin, the number of UTVs registered since 2012 (when registration became required) has increased over 40% annually while the number of ATVs registered has increased just 2% per year.



Demographics

As can be seen from the SCORP survey results in the table below, participants in ATV and UTV riding in Wisconsin tend to be rural men. As UTVs have become more popular, older age groups have increased their participation, a trend that is likely to continue. Because of the upfront costs as well as the expenses associated with use and maintenance, ATV and UTV riding can require more of a financial investment than many other outdoor activities. This is also likely to shift participation to older age groups, which typically have more disposable income.

Demographic Category	Demographic Group	% Participation Rate Within Demographic Category	% Composition of Demographic Category (sums to 100%)
Age	18-29	23	30
	30-39	19	21
	40-49	17	15
	50-59	16	18
	60-69	11	11
	70 and older	6	4
	Total	--	100



Gender	Female	12	38
	Male	20	62
	Total	--	100
Residence	Rural	21	63
	Urban	12	37
	Total	--	100

